

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 00938 220657Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----013128 220659Z /13

P R 220610Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6078
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

S E C R E T MANAMA 0938

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MOPS, UR, SA, BA
SUBJECT: SOVIET OVERFLIGHT OF DHAHRAN

1. ON RECENT FRIDAY MORNING (EITHER MARCH 31 OR APRIL 7)
ONE OF REGULAR SOVIET FLIGHTS DOWN DULF TO ADEN LEFT ITS
CORRIDOR, APPARENTLY DUE TO BAD WEATHER, AND OVERFLEW BOTH
BAHRAIN AND AASTERN PROVINCE IN VICINITY DHAHRAN. ACCORDING
GOB DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, SOVIETS REFUSED TO REPLY TO
BAHRAIN TOWER REGARDING THEIR INTENTIONS IN LEAVING CORRIDOR
AND BAHRAIN TOWER ALERTED DHAHRAN TOWER TO IMMINENT INTRUSION
OF SAUDI AIRSPACE BY SOVIET AIRCRAFT. BAHRAIN TOWER ASKED
DHAHRAN IF RSAF HAD PICKED UP SOVIET FLIGHT ON ITS AIR DEFENSE
SYSTEMS AND, ACCORDING CIVAIR DIRECTOR, WAS TOLD "RSAF DOES
NOT WORK ON FRIDAYS".

2. DURING BRIEF CONVERSATION APRIL 16 DEFENSE MINISTER TOLD
AMBASSADOR OF INCIDENT, CONFIRMING CIVAIR DIRECTOR'S VERSION,
AND ADDED THAT TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE NO ONE IN SAUDI CIVAIR

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SYSTEM HAS HAD COURAGE TO LET SAUDI MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN KNOW
OF INCIDENT. DEFMIN SHAIKH HAMAD REMARKED THAT INCIDENT
REINFORCED HIS FEELING THAT REGIONAL GULF SECURITY COOPERATION
NEEDS TO BE ADVANCED -- INDEED, CREATED -- AND HE HOPED HIS
ARMS REQUESTS TO USG WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THIS CONTEXT.

3. COMMENT. BAHRAIN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES CONTINUE

TO BE QUITE NERVOUS ABOUT THREATS TO SAFETY OF CIVIL AIRCRAFT
PRESENTED BY ERRATIC AND UNCOOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR OF SOVIETS
FLYING THE GULF-HORMUZ-ADEN ROUTE. POLITICAL AND MILITARY
IMPOTENCE SEEM TO BE REASONS WHY GOB AND OTHER GULF STATES
HAVE NOT GONE NOISILY PUBLIC ABOUT SOVIET MISBEHAVIOR OF THIS
KIND. EXPECT AMBASSADOR MIGHT HEAR MORE OF THIS INCIDENT FROM
SHAIKH HAMAD DURING THEIR APRIL 22 MEETING ON PENDING GOB
ARMS REQUESTS.
CLUVERIUS

SECRET

NNN

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